United Nations A/53/758

General Assembly

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Fifty-third session
Agenda item 110 (b)
Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Letter dated 15 December 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With regard to your note transmitting the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of religious intolerance, dated 24 August 1998 (A/53/279), in particular to its paragraph 71 which refers to the alleged cases in Turkey, I should like to bring the following to your attention:

Recognized as a Turkish institution by all the participant States during the Lausanne Treaty negotiations in 1923, Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul offers religious services to the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul without any hindrance.

Turkey is proud of its record of tolerance towards all religions. Today, all religious institutions in Turkey enjoy their freedom guaranteed by the Turkish Constitution without any discrimination and provide unobstructed services to their respective communities. In the course of the last few years, two regrettable but isolated incidents against Greek Orthodox Churches took place. It has been clear that those incidents were neither politically motivated nor had any anti-religious bias, but were purely of a criminal nature. Such criminal acts cannot be condoned. The Turkish Government strongly deplores such incidents and is determined to bring the perpetrators to justice. These deplorable incidents have been thoroughly investigated and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of religious intolerance has duly been informed of the inquiry. It would be a gross error to interpret such isolated incidents as a restriction of the activities of the Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 110 (b).

(*Signed*) Volkan **Vural**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-39790 (E) 181298

UNITED
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General Assembly
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Agenda item 54
CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION
OF AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 17 December 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the communiqué issued yesterday by the Government of Mexico concerning the situation in Iraq (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 54, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Manuel TELLO
Permanent Representative of Mexico
to the United Nations

98-39819 (E) 171298 171298

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ANNEX

Press release issued on 16 December 1998 by the Government of Mexico

With regard to the attack that took place in Iraq today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to state the following:

The Government of Mexico has followed closely and with deep concern the events that have developed following the submission to the Security Council today of reports on Iraq's cooperation with the United Nations authorities responsible for monitoring compliance with Security Council resolutions.

On the basis of its foreign policy principles as set out in article 89, section X, of the Constitution, the Government of Mexico regrets that it was not possible to reach a solution through the diplomatic channel and that recourse was had to the use of force, to the detriment of a lasting political solution.

The Government of Mexico reaffirms its conviction that in order to reach a definitive solution to this dispute in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, it is imperative that the procedures provided for in international law be followed and that the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, which Mexico fully supports, be implemented in their entirety.

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CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION OF AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 17 December 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement made on 17 December 1998 by the President of Belarus concerning the missile and bomb strikes against Iraq (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 54, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. Sychou
Permanent Representative of
Belarus to the United Nations

Annex

Statement made on 17 December 1998 by the President of Belarus

The missile and bomb strikes against Iraq by the United States of America and the United Kingdom on 17 December 1998 are a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and go far beyond the scope of Security Council resolutions concerning Iraq.

Belarus believes that actions by States or coalitions of States in circumvention of the Security Council, which has primary responsibility for, and plays a central role in, the maintenance of international peace and security, are unacceptable.

The use of force by the international community is an extraordinary and extreme measure that can be invoked only in cases of a serious threat to international peace and security and when the political and diplomatic possibilities for settling the conflict have been exhausted.

Belarus calls upon the United States of America and the United Kingdom to halt immediately their strikes against Iraq. Belarus also hopes that Iraq will comply fully and without delay with all the relevant Security Council resolutions.

A solution in keeping with the interests of international peace and security and the imperatives of international law should be found within the framework of the Security Council and should be strictly observed by all members of the international community. This applies, above all, to the permanent members of the Security Council.

The missile and bomb strikes do not solve the problem; they cause the death of innocent civilians and destabilize the situation in the entire region.

Belarus is deeply distressed at the attempt to solve problems of international security by the use of force and in contravention of Security Council resolutions, which seriously undermines the existing system of international security and international law.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Agenda item 62
QUESTION OF CYPRUS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 16 December 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government and further to my letter dated 7 December 1998, I have the honour to draw your attention to a new violation of the National Airspace of the Republic of Cyprus and of the flight information region of Nicosia by a military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force, recorded on 13 December 1998.

On that day one VIP C-650 military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force entered the Nicosia flight information region violating international air traffic regulations. The aircraft in question violated the National Airspace of the Republic of Cyprus flying over the area of Karpasia and exiting thereafter in a south-easterly direction.

As stated in my previous letters, such unauthorized intrusions into the Nicosia flight information region and the National Airspace of the Republic of Cyprus are in violation of international air traffic rules and, at the same time, they are in contravention of the provisions of the Security Council resolutions on Cyprus which state that such overflights increase tension on the island and undermine efforts towards achieving a final settlement.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, I wish to strongly protest this new provocative act by Turkey against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus. The frequency and intensity of airspace violations are a further reminder of Turkey's offensive disregard of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and all the relevant decisions of the Organization on the question of Cyprus.

Furthermore, the continuing overflights by the Turkish Air Force, as well as the presence of the Turkish military occupation forces on the island, constitute the underlying causes of tension in Cyprus.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sotos ZACKHEOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations A/53/762

General Assembly

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Fifty-third session
Agenda items 55 and 149

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

United Nations Decade of International Law

Letter dated 17 December 1998 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, in my capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to transmit herewith a statement on the situation in Iraq.

I would be grateful if this statement could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 55 and 149.

(Signed) Khiphusizi J. **Jele**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-39922 (E) 181298

Annex

Statement on the situation in Iraq issued by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on 17 December 1998

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries deplores the ongoing military actions against Iraq by individual countries without any authorization from the Security Council in flagrant disregard of the Charter of the United Nations. The Movement emphasizes that the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions by all parties constitutes the only means for establishing durable peace, security and stability in the region.

The Movement urgently calls for a peaceful solution to the crisis that the region currently faces, which it believes will contribute positively to the promotion and preservation of peace and security within the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

In this regard, the Movement calls on all sides to continue efforts aimed at a peaceful settlement under the auspices of the Security Council, including an active role for the Secretary-General. The Movement further calls for the immediate cessation of all military strikes and the avoidance of any actions that might further aggravate tension in the region.

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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TOGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Declaration of a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa adopted and signed in Abuja on 31 October 1998 by the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Roland KPOTSRA

98-40019 (E) 211298 221298

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ANNEX

Declaration of a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa

We, Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),

Considering the purposes and principles of the Revised Treaty of ECOWAS and of those of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations,

Considering that the traffic in small arms and light weapons constitutes a destabilizing factor for ECOWAS member States and a threat to the peace and security of our peoples,

Considering the resolutions of the United Nations conference on conflict prevention, disarmament and development held in Bamako in November 1996,

Considering the guidelines of the fourth extraordinary meeting of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government held in Lome on 17 December 1997 concerning the establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the maintenance of peace and security in the sub-region,

Considering the recommendations of the Conference of ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, the Interior and Security held in Yamoussoukro on 11 and 12 March 1998,

Considering the renewed commitment of ECOWAS member States at the Oslo Conference (1 and 2 April 1998) and the international community's support for the proposed moratorium on small arms and light weapons in West Africa,

Considering the results of the meeting of Ministers of Defence, the Interior and Security and those of the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, held in Banjul from 23 to 24 July 1998 and in Abuja from 26 to 29 October 1998, respectively, and endorsed by us at Abuja on 31 October 1998,

Considering the repeated appeals from the United Nations for disarmament in West Africa, as mentioned in the relevant resolutions of the fiftieth, fifty-first and fifty-second sessions of the General Assembly,

Considering the highly positive attitude of the member States of the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies and other arms manufacturers with respect to the proposal for a moratorium on small arms and light weapons in West Africa,

Solemnly and with one voice declare a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in the member States of the Economic Community of West African States to take effect as from 1 November 1998 for a renewable period of three (3) years,

Instruct the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, in collaboration with the United Nations system, to convene a meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and experts with a view to the establishment of the operational framework for the measures accompanying the moratorium in the context of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED),

Desirous of ensuring the success of the moratorium:

(a) We request the assistance of the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations and the international community in implementing the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development;

(b) Instruct the Executive Secretary to convene, in collaboration with PCASED, a conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs to evaluate the moratorium at the end of the initial period of three (3) years;

In witness whereof, we, Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, have signed the present Declaration.

Done at Abuja on 31 October 1998 in a single original copy in French and English, both texts being equally authentic.

(Signed) H.E. Mathieu KEREKOU
President of the Republic of Benin

(Signed) H.E. Ablassé OUEDRAOGO
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
for the President of Burkina Faso,
Chairman of the Council of
Ministers and by order

(Signed) H.E. Carlos Alberto Wahanon de Carvalho VEIGA
Prime Minister and Head of Government
of the Republic of Cape Verde

(Signed) H.E. Henri Konan BEDIE
President of the Republic of
Côte d'Ivoire

(Signed) H.E. Col. Yahya A.J.J. JAMMEH
President of the Republic
of the Gambia

(Signed) H.E. Flight Lieutenant
Jerry John RAWLINGS
President of the Republic of Ghana

(Signed) H.E. General Lansana CONTE
President of the Republic of Guinea

(Signed) H.E. Joao Bernardo VIEIRA
President of the Republic of
Guinea-Bissau

(Signed) H.E. Charles TAYLOR
President of the Republic of Liberia

(Signed) H.E. Alpha Oumar KONARE
President of the Republic of Mali

(Signed) H.E. Mohamed A. Ould MOÏNE
Ambassador, for the President of
the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
and by order

(Signed) H.E. Ibrahim Maïnassara BARE
President of the Republic
of the Niger

(Signed) H.E. General Abdulsalami ABUBAKAR
Head of State,
Commander-in-Chief of the
Armed Forces of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria

(Signed) H.E. Abdou DIOUF
President of the Republic of Senegal

(Signed) H.E. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan KABBAH
President of the Republic
of Sierra Leone

(Signed) H.E. Gnassingbé EYADEMA
President of the Togolese Republic